NORTHERN LIGHT

THE MAGAZINE OF TOC H IN ICELAND

PRICE: 1 KRÓNA NO. 3 NOVEMBER 1941

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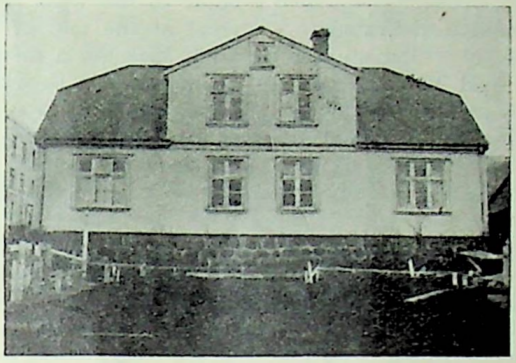
THE TOC H SERVICES CLUB.



TÚNGATA 6
REYKJAVÍK.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE MANY expressions of appreciation which we received on the September number of "Northern Light". More than twice the number of copies were sold than of the first issue, and this encourages us to go ahead with our policy of trying to provide a larger and better magazine at the price of 1 króna. We received a large number of contributions for the present issue and are equally grateful for those which we have printed and for those for which we have not found a place in our pages. We hope that the authors of the latter will not be discouraged, and will continue to send along their stuff for future numbers.

This magazine has, of course, been passed by the Censor and may be posted home provided that it is not marked in any way either by pen, pencil or even pin-point.

Toc H in Iceland has suffered a real loss by the departure from the island of Rear-Admiral R. J. Scott, A.M., R.N., who from the very earliest days of our work here has been a true friend and a wise counsellor. As Chairman of the Reykjavik House Committee he has been ready at all times to concern himself with the small practical difficulties which have from time to time beset us, and on the bigger issues of policy and development his long experience of Toc H has been of the utmost value. Many of us will long remember his fine speech at our Naval Guest Night last April. We wish him the best of good luck wherever "naval occasions" may next take him.

We were privileged to welcome the Bishop of Aberdeen to the House on more than one occasion during his recent visit to Iceland. He held two Confirmation services in our chapel and himself celebrated Holy Communinon for us one weekday morning. We were also glad to be allowed to offer hospitality to a Conference of chaplains on the island which the Bishop addressed in our library.

A second Toc H Services Club will be opening shortly in Iceland at a place which the Censor will not allow us to specify. It is hoped that the building will be completed in the near future and that the club will be in full swing before the really bad weather sets in.

It is often nowadays that one can record the establishment of satisfactory international relationships, so it is particularly pleasant to report that Toc H in Reykjavik was recently able to make possible a function at which one such relationship was happily celebrated.

On Friday 17th October Private Paul Ivor Philp of the Royal Marines, better known to his friends as Jim, was married to Sigurlaug Guðmundsdóttir, and after the ceremony had been privately performed a small wedding reception was held in the library of the House. The bride's mother and sister in full Icelandic national costume were present, and other guests, in addition to a number of Icelandic friends of the bride, included Petty Officer Charles Newnham who had acted as best man, and Lieut. Gay, R.N. Transport officer, who proposed the health of the happy couple. Toc H supplied an imposing wedding-cake, of the luscious cream variety at which Icelandic bakers excel, and a photograph of the wedding group was later taken in the garden. Toc H is glad to have been able to offer its hospitality to the young couple and wishes them both every possible happiness.

We are privileged to be able to print on page 8 of this number an article, specially written for "Northern Light", by Mr. Jóhannes Helgason, one of the party of Icelandic journalists who recently visited Great Britain as the guests of the British Ministry of Information. We are sure that this account of his impressions of the homeland under war conditions will be of real interest to our readers.

We also welcome another American contributor in PFC. Donald J. Warncke of the U. S. Marine Corps, whose drawing of a U. S. Marine outside a Nissen hut is reproduced on page 4.

An article on "What is Toc H?" has been translated into Icelandic and appears on page 17 of this issue. Additional copies of this are available, and may be obtained from Mr. Churcher for giving to Icelandic friends.

A tremendous reinforcement has been made to the work in Iceland by the arrival at the end of September of Warwick Jackson, a member of the Seaford Branch of Toc H, who — feeling the Toc H urge to service — has come out here as a volunteer at his own expense, in order to place himself unreservedly at the disposal of the staff man in charge. Warwick has previously served, also as a volunteer, with the Toc H team in France and escaped from Rouen by the skin of his teeth in June 1940. In 1936 he acted for many months as second-in-command of the King George's Jubilee Trust's Hawthorn Tower Camp for unemployed boys (a venture sponsored by Toc H). His experience, happy energy, and quiet enthusiasm are already proving a real force in the House, and he has made many friends. It is likely that he will take charge of the new club — mentioned in a previous paragraph — as soon as it is ready. In the meantime we are making the most of him in Reykjavik.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.

A number of excellent entries were received for the Photographic Competition announced in our last issue. Mr. Cecil H. Diddans, Member of the Royal Photographic Society, and Lieut. R. Hawkins, R.N.V.R., acted as judges, and the following awards have been made:

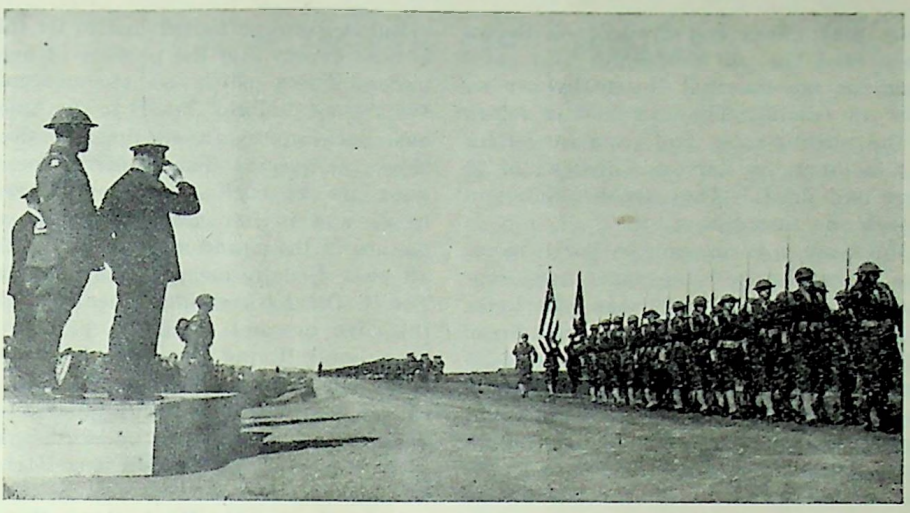
1st Prize: Signalman D. W. E. Cooke, Royal Corps of Signals.

2nd Prize: C.Q.M.S. J. W. Jones, Royal Engineers.

3rd Prize: Driver G. Butcher, R.A.S.C., attd. R.A.M.C.

Lieut. G. R. Wolfe received an Honourable Mention.

The G.O.C. Iceland Force generously gave the prizes, and we are most grateful to him for his interest and encouragement.



A detachment of the U.S. Marine Corps marches past Mr. Churchill.

THE AMERICANS ARE HERE

Toc H has given its first welcome to the troops of the U.S.A. in Iceland. First the Marines; now the Army is here. And the "globe" badge of the Marines has been followed by the plain "U.S." of the Army, and they both mix with the flashes and shoulderbadges of our own battle-dress. The Toc H Services Club has become international.

I do not think any of us will forget the events of the last three months. The convoy of the Marines in the harbour in July, with the men working all the twenty-four hours of daylight unloading the stores. Then August and the visit of our Prime Minister, immediately after the Atlantic Conference, and the sight of "Old Glory" swinging slowly in the light breeze as Mr. Churchill walked down the parade on the most perfect day of the whole summer. And the march-past — Navy, Army and Air Force and the American Marines. And finally the arrival of the Army; more transports in the harbour, driving rain and typical Icelandic autumn weather, more and more American trucks on the roads, new camps in the most unexpected places, new names, new faces, new crowds in the streets, and yet — the same language, the same feelings, the same intentions.

Showing the Americans what Toc H is and what it stands for will not be accomplished in a few weeks. We have all, members or not, known something of its existence and its purpose ever since the last war. Poperinghe, All Hallows Barking, Tubby Clayton — they are part of our national life and no new Services Club for British troops could ever exist without their being somewhere at hand a member of some branch to help and to teach and to show the others the ways and purposes of a Toc H branch. The U.S.A. did not share that background; their battles were in the Argonne and further east. Ypres and Properinghe were only names — and as for All Hallows, Barking, there were so many old churches in London with curious titles.

But they are beginning to find out. They come to the club for tea and doughnuts. They listen to the hour in English for the Forces over the Icelandic radio.

The formation of a string quartet is still held up for lack of a 'cellist.

MALE VOICE CHOIR.

The Choir, under the direction of Sub-Lieut. F. W. Pitt, R.N.V.R., has given its first performance over the air, and will have made its second appearance in the programme of the English Hour from Reykjavik by the time this is in print. On the first occasion Dr. Sydney Northcote's arrangement of "All Through the Night" for male voices was the pièce de resistance; the programme on the second occasion consisted of a selection of Stephen Foster songs. A number of new members have recently swelled the numbers, but there is room for more men still. Practices are on Wednesday evenings at 8.30 p.m.

PLAY-READING AND LITERARY SOCIETY.

The following five plays have been read since these notes last appeared:

The Fourth Wall	by A. A. Milne,
Arms and the Man	by G. Bernard Shaw,
Bird in Hand	by John Drinkwater,
Mr. Pim passes by	by A. A. Milne,
The Admirable Crichton	by Sir James Barrie.

Captain Gould gave us a brilliant talk one evening on "The English Language", stressing the merits of Anglo-Saxon words in preference to the use of Latinised forms. Though he pressed his argument home with many interesting and amusing examples we feel that we have not yet reached the stage at which we could happily refer to an omnibus as a "folk wain". Major E. G. Cousins, whose talks about English poetry have been so much enjoyed in the past, tackled a new subject (for us) and spoke about "Films and Film Stars" to a delighted audience. Major Cousins was before the war Editor of the "Film Pictorial" and certainly knows his stuff. Ptes H. Thompson and J. C. Sully opened a most interesting "Book Review" evening with reviews of H. G. Wells' "Brave New World" and James Joyce's "Ulysses", and the monthly "Spare My Blushes" evenings produced their usual spate of original poems, short stories and essays. The November programme will be on the notice board by the time this is in print. Meetings are held every Sunday evening at 8.30 p.m., and anyone interested in spending an informal evening in this kind of way will be very welcome.

DEBATING SOCIETY.

Only two debates have been held since the last issue of "Northern Light". At the first the House decided by a considerable majority that the pen was mightier than the sword, and at the second declined to approve of the proposed abolition of the hire purchase system. We were glad to welcome two new chairmen at these debates in the persons of the Rev. R. C. Parkinson, R.N.V.R., and Surgeon-Lieut. D. B. Jack.

CHESS CLUB.

This is a new development since our last issue, and owes its start and steady growth to the untiring enthusiasm of Corporal P. Bunting. A club tournament is now in progress, and it is hoped to arrange some matches in the near future, one of which is to be against an Icelandic team.

THE TIC TOCS

I was highly honoured some time ago when Mr. Churcher invited me to organise a concert party which might become available for troops' entertainments. Entertaining happened to be my vocation before entering the Army, so naturally the suggestion appealed to me. The task of organising has not been difficult, for a fine little band of artistes soon materialised and within three weeks of formation the party, under the title of "The Tic Tocs" had broadcast the first edition of "Talbot Mag", which has now been accepted as a regular radio feature. Since then two further editions have been on the air.

Perhaps I may be permitted to express my thanks to the artistes who have rallied round so loyally and who have attended rehearsals regularly in spite, often, of considerable personal inconvenience. They have the real "trouper" spirit, and are very enthusiastic.

Recently the Tic Tocs made their first stage appearance and their efforts to entertain were obviously appreciated.

The regular artistes are: Corporal R. Soar, an able raconteur and a first rate impersonator; Sapper W. Thomas, a baritone with a very pleasing voice; Will A. Maze (Private Finkelstein), as good a cardmanipulator as it has ever been my fortune to see; Pte J. Wilson, an operatic tenor with plenty of reserve; S.Q.M.S. E. C. Plush, a veritable wizard on the piano; "The Tumbleweeds", a melodious combination of voices and a guitar; Sergt. Plater, a comedian with some hilarious comedy material; Pte J. Hudson, a great success with his ventriloquial figure "Charlie"; and Corporal Slaughter, who has a flair for reviving old music hall hits.

It is hoped that during the coming winter the Tic Tocs will be able to carry the spirit of Toc H outside the confines of the Club, and bring some pleasure to other members of the Forces sharing in the defence of Iceland. H. V. S.

The swaddy who lost his pack.

AN ICELANDER IN BRITAIN

(We are grateful to Mr. Jóhannes Helgason, who recently visited Great Britain with a party of Icelandic journalists, for this account of his impressions.)

Broadly speaking there are to a visiting eye two main aspects of Great Britain to-day due to the war. Firstly, there is the destruction of towns and the sufferings of the people concerned. Secondly, there is an admirable calmness and cheerfulness due to the courage and moral strength of the British people manifesting itself in various ways.

Let us consider the first. Destructions of British towns by air-raids is far less than I expected it to be. The perpetual raids have, of course, caused much damage, particularly the Blitz in London in the autumn of 1940. But constant daily news about air-raids and damages caused make one liable to imagine things much worse than they actually are. The remoteness may affect one's imagination in the same way. My experience was that I found things by far better than I expected.

Of the towns I saw, London and Coventry may serve as an example. Before I came to London, which I knew well as I stayed there the last year before the war, I thought that I would find little left. But I was to a great extent mistaken. Damage has of course been caused on a large scale, for example the City and surroundings of St. Pauls was to a considerable extent in ruins, and similar was the situation as to two or three places in East End. But in other parts of London you see one or two houses in ruins widely spread over the whole town. Nevertheless you can walk whole streets to an end without any damage to see. And if you try to compare the damages with the undamaged you feel relieved. Those who realise the immense size of London understand that London is a target not so difficult to hit somewhere. Beautiful buildings of historical importance such as Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St. Pauls, have been damaged but not so much as one thinks. Nevertheless, that is a pitiful loss. On the other hand military important things such as the Battersea Power Station and even the many bridges of Thames are untouched and most of the important factories in the outskirts of London where I passed through.

The situation of Coventry is this; important factory quarters are nearly all round, but dwelling houses, shops and churches make up the central part of the town. I drove through both these main parts of the town. In the factory sector I did not see one factory damaged but the town itself was practically in ruins.

As I could not understand the nature of this warfare, selecting civilians and dwelling houses as a target rather than important factories which were all around, I asked the Lord Mayor of Coventry what were the explanations of this. He said: "The only explanation seems to be that the Germans believe they can cause panic and break down the morale of the people and stop the factories by these means."

"But have the results been that way?" I asked. "No, but wholly the opposite. The people of Coventry have never been so anxious to do the greatest possible part in the war effort as after the great air-raids", was the Mayor's reply.

Next house to the Town Hall, where we enjoyed the friendly hospitality of the Mayor and his colleagues, was before the raids the beautiful and magnificent Cathedral of Coventry, but after the air-raids there was nothing left but ruins, except the tower, unimpaired like a splendid and worthy monument of the supreme courage of the people, so used to be within its walls.

The other aspect — the attitude of the people of Britain — drew most my attention and aroused my admiration more than anything else I saw or heard in Great Britain. I talked to many people with the intention to find out their real state of mind, as the object of my visit was search for truth. Shop assistant's attitude was, "We will stand it." One-legged man in hotel lift said, "We will take it. Hitler cannot frighten us." Woman in underground station with her children overnight said, "I feel quite happy. I am not afraid of Hitler here; I am safe." Same was the attitude of all those I spoke to.

The strongest desire in ordinary men and women was the desire to be of some use, to know that they share by useful work in the general war effort. The people in a huge factory producing machines for aircraft seemed as if they felt the importance of their work. The many voluntary assisting organisations, the firemen, the women of Great Britain, still have their untold stories, which will in the future serve as a noble example for generations to come, when these stories will be told.

The same spirit prevails in the heroic deeds of those who do the more active part of the fighting. I met the British airmen at air stations. I witnessed the cheerful spirit of these men, who have won the gratitude and admiration of their countrymen and of the civilized world at large. I saw them before they set off for Germany and after they came back.

I saw the army-men preparing to meet the German invaders — or rather, as they said themselves, preparing to invade Germany and do the fighting there so as to spare their country.

Everywhere all seemed to be united with the conviction as to the importance of the cause they are fighting for and their belief in victory.

J. H.

An unconventional picture of Mr. Churchill in Iceland — testing the hot springs at Reykir to see if they are really hot.

Reykjavik. The Lake.

THE STREETS OF REYKJAVIK

Street names are like the events of history; sometimes they just happen, records of the obvious, and sometimes they possess a gleam of originality, wherein shine traces of imagination and appreciation. Often they are reference tags to the chapters of history, commemorating as they do, famous and notorious persons and incidents, and social and religious revolutions. Witness the numerous Adolf Hitler streets and squares which now replace former more honourable names.

Reykjavik too, has an agglomeration of street names which seemingly have adhered to tradition in observing no thorough or orderly system of nomenclature, but follow a meandering flight of fact and fancy.

Obvious are the streets of East, West, and South, Austur-stræti, Vestur-gata, and Suður-gata. Banka-stræti needs no explanation, but who would recognise the familiar High Street in Aðal-stræti? — Lauga-vegur points the way to the hot springs, running parallel with Hverfis-gata, which marks the nameless Quarter of Reykjavik. From these last two streets branch many "stigur", a word which means foot-path, but is also used for an unusually narrow street. Klapparstigur is the street of the low, flat rock. At one time it must have been an isolated stretch of those typical sea-washed lava stones seen on the waterfront of Skúla-gata, named after Skúli Magnússon, the Icelandic Sheriff and Civil servant who of-

fered such a spirited resistance against the injustice of the Danish monopoly.

As befits a sea-faring nation, the Icelanders have more than one name for matters relating to the sea. Báru-, Öldu- and Rånar-gata are the billows and waves of the ocean, the last named being a tribute to the sea-goddess, Rán. Ægir, the sea god, is also remembered in Ægis-gata. Stýrimanna-stigur is dedicated to the seconds in command, practical masters of their ships before they graduate to the less arduous, but more responsible rank of captain.

Unlike towns in other parts of Europe, there are few streets in Reykjavik which denote the Christian beliefs of the people. Kirkju-stræti shows that there is a church in the same way that Tjarnar-gata indicates the presence of a lake, but the popular saints of street and square, Peter and Paul, are absent. In their place reign the familiar gods of the old Norse mythology. Nevertheless, Odin, greatest of the gods, magician and ruler of Asaland, and founder of Scandinavia, has only a secondary street to his name. Likewise with Thor, the god of war and thunder, known by his hammer which he lost, and regained by cunningly impersonating a goddess. His symbol of power is still seen everywhere in the Northern Countries. The reversed swastika, (often confused with the Nazi emblem), shows the striking range of the iron hand of Thor to the four corners of the earth. Freyja, wealthy and tender-hearted queen, who wept tears of gold for her husband is remembered too. She was the last of the gifted rulers of the North to possess the powers of the gods, and in her honour all married women have since been called Frú.

The unused market-place of Reykjavik is known as Lækjar-torg; the market of the brook; and Lækjar-gata follows the course of the stream which flowed from the lake to the sea some thirty years ago.

Þingholts-stræti marks the site of the local "Thing" on the small hill. There is a less renowned Hill Street in Holts-gata. A prettily named street is Sóleyjar-gata, from where it is possible to catch a glimpse of the golden buttercups, which surely should be the national flowers of Iceland.

The modest violet is brought to notice in Fjólu-gata, whilst the important and more useful clover is named in Smára-gata. After the flowers of the meadow we must include Tún-gata, which still leads the way to a square of luxuriant grass; the Tún, or cultivated meadow, which is one of the chief features of an Icelandic farm.

Sagaland is well represented. Grettis-gata recalls the cantankerous, headstrong, almost unlikeable individual from the first days in Iceland, who, outlawed for twenty years, was forever in flight, but not without finding time to plunder and kill man, bear, or troll. He liked to boast and show off his strength by swimming in the icy fjords, or lifting lava rocks, which, (even admitting his superhuman energy), must have grown a great deal in the intervening centuries! Another famous character is the lawman Njal, who was burnt to death in his house as a consequence of one of the bitter feuds of the day. His wife Bergþóra, who shared his fate, has also a street named after her.

The position of Ingólfsstræti brings the name of Iceland's first settler into daily prominence. The first Icelandic settler in Greenland too is not forgotten. In a more modern part of the town is seen the name of Eirik the Red, and his still more famous son, Leif.

Thus the men of action, the fighters, outlaws, adventurers and lawmen, are immortalised, and brought into everyday life as long as town and stone last.

A. S.

THE PEARL WITHIN THE SHELL

A few yards from the hustle and bustle of a Reykjavik highway there stands a humble yet magnificent building; little, known little. Let us divert our steps and our thoughts, if only for a few moments, from the impatient queue of servicemen waiting their turn to enter the adjacent club and canteen. Can we spare a minute? Yes. Then let us go in quest of this quiet spot.

We leave the beaten entrance to the Club with its steady, noisy flow of men, and traverse a rough little-used pathway, flanked on one side by a wall and on the other by the busy club kitchen. The path turns sharply right behind the house and terminates abruptly at the entrance to an outhouse of some kind. On entering we find ourselves in a small, stone-floored room, bare of furniture or fitting with the exception of a rather steep ladder giving access, it appears, to a loft above. Like Jacob, shall we ascend? Dare we go farther in this search for combined quiet and beauty? We can but try. We approach the ladder and feel tentatively for a foothold, then begin to climb steeply. At the top is an open trapdoor. We climb through, passing from dark to light, from the squalid to the beautiful. Yes, this is God's house within a house; a pearl within a shell. Here is peace and quiet. We face east and sit upon one of the small stools. Before us stands the altar, surmounted by a cross of wood, plain yet a beautiful creation. The roof slopes gracefully away into a grey apex, toning clearly with the white supports. The bible lies open on the altar table, the mellow glow from the candles radiating its gilded pages.

We sit long and in silence, sublimely oblivious to the passage of time. Our thoughts are of loved ones at home, our prayers are for loved ones at home. We pray quietly, individually. Yes, we have found quiet, beauty and peace of mind in this little pearl within the shell.

We descend the old loft ladder with a feeling of reluctance, from the light to the darkness, from the beautiful to the squalid. We retrace our steps along the rough little-used pathway, turn sharp left past the busy club kitchen and take our place in the queue of servicemen awaiting admission to the club. Soon we are once more among the familiar sounds of the canteen, the clatter of dishes, heavy boots, the strident notes of the piano.

D. O.

PADRE'S LETTER

I have been reading part of the story of the life of Sir George Burns, the founder of the Cunard Steamship Company. His ships were not always so fast as those of other lines, but their record of safe and successful voyages was much better. It was well known that Sir George was a great believer in prayer, and people thought that it was only prayer that maintained the good record, but there was something more in it.

The Cunard chief himself said: ".... I believe implicitly in the power of prayer, but I also believe in doing work well and in subordinating profit and speed and public opinion to safety, comfort and efficiency." He believed in prayer but he believed that hard efficient work was necessary as well. It is worth remembering that God does take care of the man who commits his way to Him, but he also expects that man to do his part.

Two ministers were being ferried across a loch in Scotland in a rowing boat when a storm swept down from the hills. Things were not too pleasant and the boat was

making little headway and was in some danger. One of the ministers was a large athletic man, the other was small and less well equipped physically. They discussed the situation and decided that they had both better pray about it. The boatman overheard them and broke in with these words: "Na, na, let the wee man pray, but let the big man tak' an oar."

This is sound advice. We must pray always but never slack our effort. Christianity is not an easy-going thing; it requires all our efforts as well as our prayers to overcome temptation; to live pure and speak true; to be kind and gracious in facing unpleasantness; to forgive those who have wronged us; to help others in the way; to be efficient at our job, whatever it may be; above all, to be loyal to Christ our Master. Saying a few prayers won't help us unless we are willing to strive for righteousness. When the voyage is rough we must pull our weight.

"... Come, labour on;
No time for rest till glows the western sky.
While the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,
And a glad sound comes with the setting sun:
— "Servants, well done." ..."

J. R.

TOC H SERVICES GROUP, REYKJAVIK

On the last Tuesday in August we held the third of our series of Service Guest Nights, this time for the Royal Air Force. The whole ground floor of the house was filled with men in Air Force blue, and the Guest of Honour was Air-Commodore W. H. Primrose, C.B.E., D.F.C. The Tic Tocs put on an excellent entertainment, and after Light had been taken by LAC Groves, Alec Churcher "put Toc H across" to the assembly. A fortnight later we welcomed another distinguished visitor in the person of Mr. C. Howard Smith, British Minister in Iceland, who gave us a most interesting talk on "Peace Aims". We should like to have been able to report a great deal of this, but his talk was, at his request, "off the record".

The following week, which by a coincidence was the actual anniversary of the first Toc H meeting held in Iceland, we held our first Annual General Meeting, and the following officers were elected for the coming year:

Chairman: Captain E. S. Watkins.
Secretary: SQMS, E. C. Plush.
Treasurer: Corporal R. P. Soar.
Asst. Sec. and Johm.: L/Cpl. R. Bolton.
Asst. Treasurer: AC. L. Little.
Committee member: Pte. Sargent.

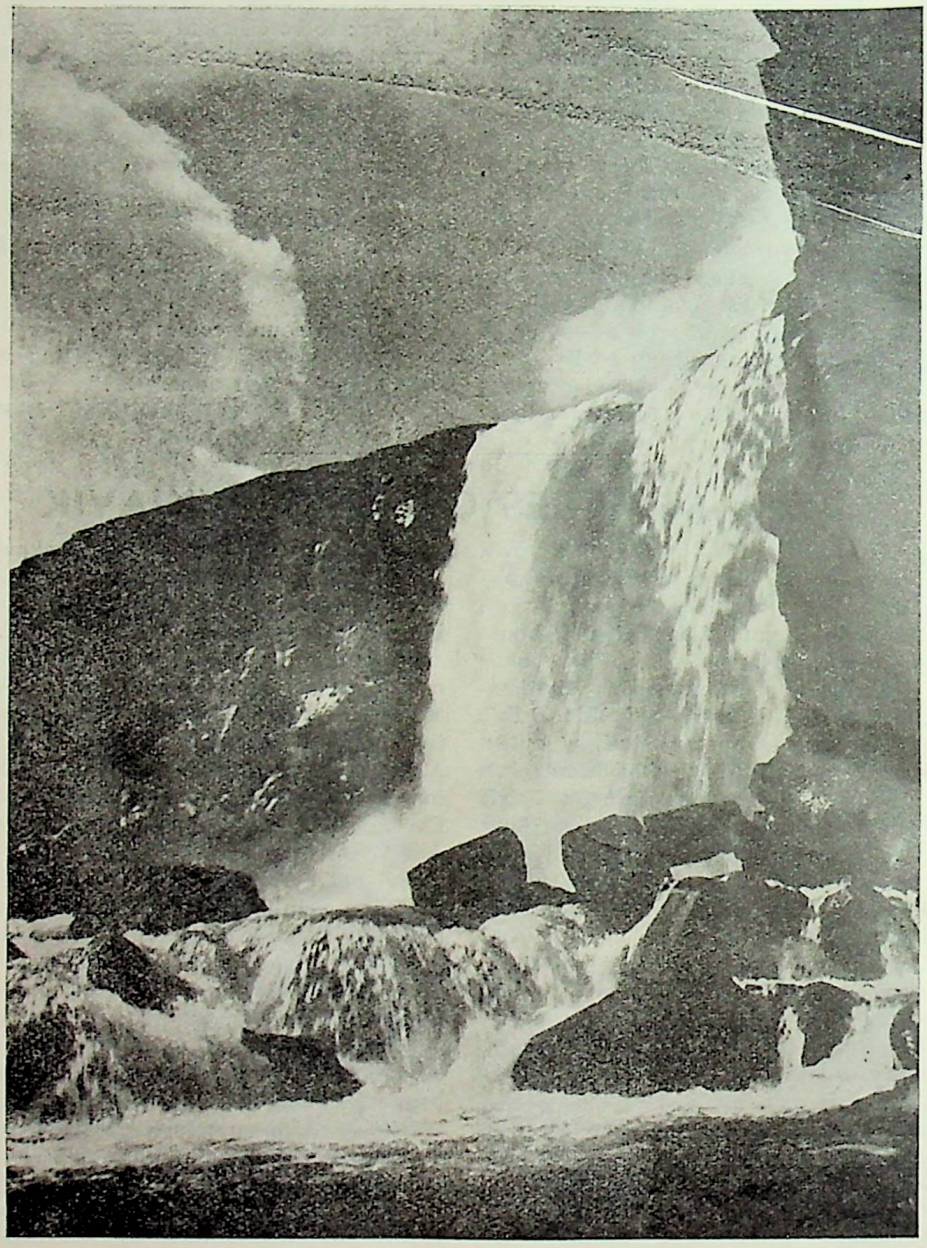
It was also decided to ask Headquarters to re-appoint Padre R. Craig (C.E.) and Padre J. Robertson (Free Ch.) as our joint Branch padres.

In addition to the speakers already mentioned, we have been glad to welcome Major M. Bratby, who gave us a fascinating talk on "Icelandic birds", and Mr. A. M. Williams, H. M. Vice-Consul in Iceland, who spoke on "Experiences of a Consular Officer in Hamburg and Rotterdam".

The main policy of the Group for the next few months will be directed to two ends; the improvement of our understanding of American ideals and ways of life, and the fostering of good relations with the Icelanders. In connection with the first of these a series of talks and discussions, led by American speakers, is in course of being arranged. Full particulars of this will be announced very shortly. The second aim can perhaps best be attained by individual action, but we are hoping to run a Guest Night for Icelanders in the near future.

The Group meets every Tuesday evening in the House at 8.15 p.m., and a warm invitation is extended to anyone interested.

E. C. P.



Öxarárfoss, a beautiful waterfall at Þingvellir.

SPRING JOURNEY

Our souls grew tired in the dull days
And enthusiasm died in the Northern Night
Until the returning sun broke not our ennui.
The exhilerating ski-run and exquisitely grooved snow
Lacked strength to rouse us.
And the pale Aurora's flying flame
Avoided us in cold austerity,
Like the marble breasts of Venus
When the desire is for warm and living breasts.
Spring was far away, and enthusiasm died.

Then came a day when it seemed winter should end,
And travelling, driven by faith of years, we found
The birds of Arctic Spring, superb-winged terns;
Saw the colourful sunlight glint on glaciers, saw the swirl
Of new-thawed rivers; patches of bright grass
Skirted the bare brown hills; Spring strove to cover
The barriers of rock with brilliant moss;
Yet these delighted us but lightly, did not move
The pall still over us, brought small elation.

Until at the end of our road we heard a roar
And a thunder, where a glitter of bright water
Rolled from the lip of a lake, under a fall ridge of snow
In a hurling fall to a gorge, whose rock walls threw
A roaring surge of foam and radiant spray
Where rainbows cavorted round columned mists of gold.
The cliff top's drenched turf trembled, exultant we lay
For our eyes to absorb the sensation, while the surprise
Of beauty from prison, prison'd beauty burst
At once from ice-bound earth and earth-bound man.
Restored lost zest, stirred spirit and aroused
Great Spring, elate within us, in the spate of his thunderous joy.

W. P.

ORDINARY SEAMAN

I can't begin with a nicely-turned nautical phrase because of my lack of experience. The Royal Navy has branded me an ORD: SEA: H.O., and as such the older hands look upon me merely as so much ballast. They are, for the most part, ex-fishermen, to whom the mysteries of knotting and splicing, heaving and swinging the lead, and all the many constituents of seamanship are an open book. Yet despite my greenness I have learnt a tremendous amount in my first two months at sea, such as the true values of such words as "anchor" and "harbour", and the literal truth of that misunderstood phrase, "the bounding wave".

We steamed out of a glassy calm harbour with a weak but willing sun adding its quota to the prospects of a good trip. The first sixteen hours were comfortable. Then some of the crew began to lose their appetite, and the movement of the ship began to throw our belongings into untidy heaps in the corner; while occasionally water came pouring down the companion-way into the mess. I arrived on deck to a scene of leaden skies and a sullen turbulent sea, whose every movement spelt trouble. By the end of the next watch our speed had been reduced to one knot and the seas were mountainous. The cook struggled against a flooded galley and the ship's efforts to loop the loop, to prepare a hot meal for us. His efforts should be sung in saga a thousand years hence.

After four hours below, sleeping with knees and elbows jammed against the side of the bunk, came another spell on the bridge. The journey from the mess, a distance of some twenty to thirty yards, was a nightmare of swirling water; a slow and ungainly advance in which each step and each hand-grip demanded the utmost concentration. The deck was almost permanently awash and from time to time an extra big "green 'un" flooded the wings of the bridge. By this time tempers were frayed, eyes were bloodshot with sleepless rest below, and regular meals were out of the question. Beside the task of bringing the ship through unharmed, we were looking for another ship which had to be escorted.

The storm lasted for two days, a mere forty-eight hours of time, but to me, in my inexperience, an age. And yet I'm glad I've seen it all. I have seen a display of skill and tenacity of which I never dreamed. When the war is over, my memories are bound to be tinged with a little pride at having sailed in one of "the little ships".

We found our quarry and returned to harbour. As for me, there I was planning fine tales of storm and tempest, to tell when the war is over — but I'm afraid they will never be told. My bubble of conceit was broken by two ex-fishermen from Grimsby whom I overheard bemoaning the fact that winter would soon be here, bringing some rough weather with it! Ye gods! — and I was beginning to think I was a sailor.

And now we are in the harbour, where dwell all the delights of our present existence. Perhaps there is mail; there are evenings ashore, new faces, a hundred little things which make our life worth while. And — who knows? — our next trip may be to the "mainland", our Mecca.

C. G. O.

POTTED WISDOM

It's the Growling Man who leads a Dog's Life.

"I don't think ....," said Alice.
"Then you shouldn't talk," said the Hatter.

HVAÐ ER TOC H?

„... Að yfirvinna hatrið mundi gera endi á stríði allra þjóða, en það er engum erfiðleikum bundið fyrir mennina að kynnast hver öðrum, og það er hálfur sigur."

Hvað er það? Toc H vinnur að því að efla vináttu mannanna og þjónustu þeirra hvers við annan? Alltaf, en þó einkum nú, þegar þau verðmæti eru einskis metin, sem eignað var ævarandi gildi, heldur þar uppi merki sannleika og skilnings, óeigingirni og drengskapar, og einstaklingsfrelsi, sem grundvallast á raunhæfu, kristilegu viðhorfi til lífsins.

Upphafið. Það var fyrst kallað Talbot House (Toc H er stafirnir T. H. á merkjamáli hersins), og var opnað 1915 í belgiska bænum Paperinghe, næsta aðsetursstað, sem mögulegur var, við odda varnarlínunnar við Ypres. Það var til þess ætlazt, að það yrði eins konar hvíldarstaður, þar sem menn frá skotgröfunum gætu notið hressingar fyrir líkama, sál og anda. Það var aðallega að þakka séra P. B. Clayton, þjónandi herpresti, að það fékk brátt orð á sig meðal brezka setuliðsins sem staður vináttu og gladværðar. Mönnum var ekki aðeins boðið þar upp á smávarning til sölu, heldur þá smámuni, sem minna á heimilið, og öllum þykir vænt um. Margir, sem þangað komu, leituðu til kapellunnar uppi á loftinu og fengu þar nýjan styrk, sem lét þá verða þess vara, að handan við flóð og fjöru hins tímanlega, er raunveruleiki hins eilífa.'

1919 til 1939. "Tubby" Clayton og nokkrir, sem eftir urðu, sáu, að fulla nauðsyn bar til þess á friðartímum, að varðveita þá félagstilfinningu sameiginlegrar þjónustu og fórnar, sem vaknað hafði hjá þeim á stríðsárunum og innræta hana síðari kynslóðum. Hugmyndin náði hylli. Árið 1939 hafði Toc H verið komið á fót á meir en 1000 stöðum á Bretlandseyjum og myndað samband, sem náði til 500 annarra deilda innan og utan Bretaveldis.

Starf félagsins. Í starfi sínu að þeim markmiðum, sem Toc H stefnir að, hefir sérhver meðlimur svokallaðan Toc H áttavita sér til leiðbeiningar. — Fjórar áttir hans má einkenna sem hér segir:

Að byggja af kostgæfni. (a) Að byggja markvist upp sitt eigið líf, án þess að gleyma því, að það, sem mestu máli skiptir, er ekki það, sem hann getur gert fyrir sjálfan sig, heldur fyrir aðra. (b) Að álíta Toc H sem brú milli sín og annarra manna, byggja það upp af kostgæfni og líta á sinn þátt í því verki sem heilagt hlutverk.

Að eiga viðfeðman kærleika. Að temja sér það dag frá degi að skilja menn og hjálpa þeim, hverjir sem þeir eru, og hvernig sem ástatt er.

Að hugsa drengilega. Að ávinna sér þann drengskap í hugsun, sem aftrar honum frá því að fyrirlíta frábrugðnar skoðanir sínum eigin, en dæma af auðmýkt um mikilsverð mál, forðast fordóma og leita sannleikans.

Að bera trú sinni vitni í auðmýkt. Toc H er grundvallað á þeirri sannfæringu, að mikilsverðast sé að útbreiða fagnaðarboðskapinn í hversdagslífinu. Sérhverjum meðlim er skylt að vera minnugur þess, að verkin tala.

Toc H á Íslandi. Toc H á Íslandi ber fyrst og fremst fyrir brjósti líkamlegar og andlegar þarfir brezkra hermanna á Íslandi, og húsið Túngata 6 er helgað þessu málefni. En það reynir einnig, hér sem annars staðar, að brúa bilið milli einstaklinga og þjóða, með skynsemd og skilningi. — Toc H fundir eru haldnir í húsinu á hverju þriðjudagskvöldi kl. 8,15. — Sérhver Íslendingur, sem hefir áhuga á hugsjónum þeim, er Toc H vinnur að, er boðinn og velkominn.

"X" GENERAL HOSPITAL GROUP OF TOC H

On September 3rd Alec Churcher, supported by Padre Craig, paid us a visit for the purpose of presenting us with our Rushlight, thus welcoming us officially as a unit into the great family of Toc H. Alec gave us a very interesting talk on Toc H as he had seen it in many parts of the world, and about the meaninug of its various activities. He also informed us that we were to his knowledge the most northerly group of Toc H in the world, and would now have the privilege of taking part in the World Chain of Light in December.

The following week, by kind permission of our Officer Commanding, we were able to open a small Toc H Quiet Room on September 17th. This has proved a great asset, although our meetings have already grown too large for it. The Jobby is planning a splendid scheme for providing our hospital with a mobile library. By this scheme we hope to be able to give every patient the chance to exchange a book at least once a day. We also hope to co-operate with the unit Entertainment Committee in the organisation of indoor social activities for staff and patients during the winter. Meetings are held every Wednesday evening at 20.30 hours in the Toc H room, Ward 33.

J. G. P.

CONVERSATION PIECE

(Overheard in Reykjavik soon after the arrival of the first American contingent).

"Hy-ja!"

"'allo, chum, lookin' for somethin?"

"Yea, where's the speak-easy joint?"

"Speakeasy, — — you won't no drinks around 'ere, chum."

"Say, some guy at the docks gave me the wire about a dive called the "Midnight Sun'."

"Must a bin pullin' year leg — — or yeah might say 'Hoodwinked'.

"Why, the double-crosser, O.K. then, I guess it'll have to be a hot dog."

"You won't get no 'ot dogs around 'ere."

"No hot dogs! Say, what's a guy do in this place?"

"You'll find out."

"Say, how long since you hit this place?"

"Sixteen months ago."

"How yeah doin' with these swell lookin' dames?""

"I saw one smile just before last Christmas."

"You wanna little technique, pal. You see, ice thaws, jest wants a little warmin'."

"That's wot I thought, sixteen months ago."

"Don't you ever have no fun?"

"I enjoy meself in me own way."

"I bet you do. Gimme a break, pal, what's her flat number?"

"You got me wrong, chum, I jest look at the mountains."

"Look at the mountains! Say, what kind of a gag is this?"

"You get kind of attached to 'em up 'ere after sixteen months."

"Yea, I guess so. — — sort o' makes you laugh. — — What do you do when you're not lookin' at the mountains?"

"You'll find it a nice change to 'ave a good look at the sea."

R. P. S.

FROM OUR POST BAG

Dear Sir,

I have just got the first number of "Northern Light" and I think it's very nice and that's what I wrote and told my boy friend who sent it from Iceland. He is a soldier in Iceland and he found it on the floor at the Y.M.C.A., so that it cost him nothing. He says it was well worth it. We are going to get married after the War and he said it would help towards our home because I make a lot of raspberry jam and the paper is just right for the jars, so hoping this leaves you as it finds me at present.

Your truly,
Annie Laurie,
Haggis Cottage, Drummond, Fife.

(Please send us your boy friend's address, Annie. The Y.M.C.A. think he may have some of their mugs).

Dear Sir,

A fellow officer told me he heard the cuckoo in Reykjavik at the end of September. Is this a record, or was it only that Lance-Corporal who landed here in May 1940 and for the last two months has been noticed walking about the town imitating birds and laughing hysterically at small postmen?

Yours faithfully,
B. Sowber (2nd Lieut.),
Wilderness Camp.
Somewhere in Iceland.

(No, this is not a record, sir. As late as October a cuckoo from the Borg Hotel was observed trying to climb into the Cathedral clock).

Sir,

I have a hobby. Collections of news I make for amusements. Pleez will you tell me little things vich the soldiers and sailors say in Toc H house? I am happy to know how many the soldiers are in Iceland, and on vich days the big ships do come. It is my leetle hobby. I am happy.

I am meinself,
John Bull Smith,
Portsmouth.

(Of course we will, dear sir. Please send us your full address. We should like to put someone Wise).

Sir,

Through your columns I should like to give your readers some idea of the Tricycle Theory which states that the war will be over in 19 years.

If you take the number of draught sets sold in Stratford-on-Avon in the spring of 1928, and add to this figure the number of children under three who went to Brighton on Sunday 13th of July of the same year, you will find that the answer is 189,019, the first four figures of which form the number of an old tricycle which Hitler played with when a boy. The remaining figure, 19, forms the basis of my theory.

Further information can be obtained from my booklet, "The Menace of War Profiteers" which I shall be pleased to send, postage free, on payment of 15/6. If my theory is correct, your readers will have plenty of time to study it.

Ernie Perkins (Professor),
Shoreditch, London E.

(Thank you, Professor. The last time we heard from you, it was about a different theory. Have you decided to give up your scheme for re-building the pyramids?)

dear gladys½

The edit or has allowed ME ½ — to use his typwriter t o write you This lettre /xx2 We are not ½ having a good time up here?? mm plenty of concertw and everyone happy and jolly faces everywhere, like I said to charlie yesterday (: everything so cheap money for jam. The sgt. Major calls us about ½ past nine a and we h ave our breakfast in bed; then we go on par ade and because we only have 3 hou rs daylight you can see we don8t do very much work½ You have of course read all about the wonderful times we have in xx the papers what with dances and all that sort of thing mm . we all listen to the wireless in the afternoon when we have the boys of the force giving shows on the AIR very good too. i get your letters every other day dear ann i noticed in your last one that tom has got stationed near home. I AM sorry for him because he cannot see anything of the world i bet he is really browned off having no change from what he used to have when he was a civvie. please don8t think I am grumblingm but don8t write quite so often because I HAve not got the time to answer all your lettres because I Mean to say i have to go to the dances and concerts and read up all the xxx latest news in the papers which come out every day because i must do the same as all the fellows.

All the best dear i shall be home for my leave again soon so untill next time keep smiling.

yours with lots of loev

Bill.

(This letter seems to have slipped into our columns by mistake. We hope dear gladys½ will receive it).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Once again we are indebted to Ísafoldarprentsmiðja h.f., the publishers of "100 Íslenzkar Myndir" ("100 Icelandic Pictures"), for the loan of the blocks of the pictures of Icelandic scenes on pages 10 and 14. The pictures of Mr. Churchill's visit to Iceland are from the illustrated souvenir book published by Mr. Ívar Guðmundsson, to whom we express our gratitude. We also desire to offer our sincere thanks to our printers, Félagsprentsmiðjan h.f., whose most interested co-operation at all times has contributed largely to the accurate and punctual publication of this magazine.

The next issue of this magazine will appear on January 1st 1942. Contributions, correspondence etc. will be welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, Northern Light, Toc H Services Club, Túngata 6, Reykjavík.

WHAT IS

Toc H is out to win men's friendsh
others. It stands always, but especially
and are being discarded, for truth and
dealing, for individual freedom based

Toc H is a Christian society. It
membership anyone who will work wit
much can be obtained at the Toc H Serv
who interested is invited to attend any
held every Tuesday evening at 8.15 in
in Reykjavik (and its Clubs all over the
all, is open to any member of H.M. or
actual or implied, to join the Toc H